back station at Sasaram to connect the Eastern and Northern power regions of the country. However, there has been difference of opinion in the matter of sharing of the transmission charges. The matter is being resolved through discussions with the concerned States.

(c) and (d) The various power regions of the country are to be inter-connected in order to form a National Grid. A 500 MW HVDC back to back link at Vindhyachal already exists connecting the Northern and Western regions. A 1000 MW HVDC back to back link at Chandrapur connecting Western and Southern regions has also been established. A 500 MW HVDC back to back project at vizag connecting the Southern and Eastern regions is under execution and is expected to be completed by March, 1999. A 400 KW D/C line between Bongaigaon and Malda which would connect the Eastern and North Eastern regions is also being executed and is expected to be commissioned by March, 1998. Also, as stated in reply to part (b) a 500 MW HVDC back to back project at Sasaram has been planned to connect the Eastern and Northern regions. This project is expected to be commissioned by 2000-2001. With this, the framework of the National Grid would be completed.

Power Transmission Projects

1344. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the power transmission projects being offered to private sector for development; and

(b) who will grant transmission licence for inter-state scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) An enabling legal framework is necessary for transmission projects to be undertaken as a distinct activity by private companies not necessarily in conjunction with generation and distribution. The Electricity Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997 was, therefore, introduced in the last session of Parliament. The Bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Energy for their consideration.

(b) The Electricity Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997, provides that the Central Government or any authority notified by it may grant transmission licence in respect of inter-state transmission of energy and State Government or any authority notified by it may grant transmission licence in respect of inter-state transmission of energy.

Setting up of new Generation Capacity

1345. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to permit the public/state sector to set up new generation capacity during the current plan period;

(b) if so, the reason for change in Policy; and

(c) the funds earmarked/allocated by Central Government for such Public Sector generation projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) to (c) New generation capacities are proposed to be set up in Central, State and Private Sectors during the Ninth Plan which is under finalisation in Planning Commission. Government policy is to encourage private sector participation and investment in the energy sector. Projects will be set up in the Central and State sectors, keeping in